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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the current status of women professors of educational administration. Research findings are reviewed and discussed in the areas of socialization of women and sex-role stereotyping, mentoring, and networking. A 37-item questionnaire addressed background information, graduate school experiences, first employment, current status, and job satisfaction. A five-point Likert scale was used to record perceptions of career and personal-related qualities and characteristics. Four open-ended questions asked for a list of discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion, and perceptions of additional thrusts needed in preparation programs for K-12 administrators that relate to equity issues. Of the identified 190 women professors of K-12 educational administration in colleges and universities, 130 (70 percent) returned questionnaires. The study findings suggest several implications relative to encouraging more women graduate students to enter the professoriate: (1) women graduate students should be given greater opportunities to further develop research skills; (2) women students must begin networking in graduate school; (3) the lack of women mentors from the professor ranks is highlighted by this study; and (4) women professors of K-12 administration provide models for school districts and the public-at-large, contributing to the positive image of women as educational administrators and leaders. Appended are 6 tables and 29 references. (MLF)

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Women Professors of Educational Administration: A Profile and Salient Issues

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Running head: WOMEN PROFESSORS

Women Professors of Educational Administration: A Profile and Salient Issues

Although women now comprise a significant portion of the American work force, they are still underrepresented in many occupations. For example, administrative positions in education typically are occupied by men although a large proportion of employees in education are women. In addition, women constitute a small minority of higher education faculty who prepare persons for administrative roles in America's schools and colleges.

While approximately 60% of graduate students in educational administration preparation programs are women (McCarthy, Kuh, Newell, & Iacona, 1988), approximately 3% of school superintendents, less than 4% of high school principals, and fewer than 17% of elementary school principals are women (Shakeshaft, 1987). In addition, one of the findings of the research reported in this paper was that less than 3% of the professors in programs that prepare students for administrative positions in elementary and secondary schools are women. In view of the fact that so few professors of K-12 educational administration are women, the purpose of this study is to assess the current status of women in this field in order to gain a greater understanding of why women choose to enter the professoriate and what their status is within the profession. A greater understanding should shed light on mechanisms that might increase the

number of women faculty in K-12 educational administration programs and possibly lead to a greater number of women administrators in elementary and secondary schools.

Background

Educational administration is not the only field in which women constitute a minority of faculty in colleges and universities. The proportion of women faculty, while increasing in the last 3 decades, still is only about 26% (Ottinger, 1984). The increase has taken place mostly in the last decades, and it is expected that the proportion will increase, since more and more women are earning doctorates (Willie & Williams, 1986). The pool of women available for professorships, even in those fields that have been dominated by men, is increasing at a relatively good rate (Robbins & Kahn, 1985). Even so, women are not "equally distributed throughout . . . academic disciplines. . . . They tend to be clustered in a small number of fields typically stereotyped as feminine: English, foreign languages, nursing, home economics, fine arts, and library science" (Etaugh, 1984, p. 21, citing Freeman, 1977; Gappa & Uehling, 1979). In education, women faculty tend to be clustered in teacher education programs, a field that typically is stereotyped as feminine. In addition to the fact that women are underrepresented in higher education in proportion to the numbers available to occupy positions, women generally are concentrated "at less prestigious

institutions . . . [and] are paid less than male faculty and are less likely to be tenured" (Etaugh, 1984, p. 24).

While women now constitute a majority of graduate students in educational administration, they remain a small minority on faculties that prepare persons for administrative positions and for professorships. Can this be explained alone by the declining enrollments in higher education in recent years? Certainly women's opportunities for employment have been limited by the reduction in vacancies (Marshall, 1984). However, this factor alone cannot explain why women do not occupy more positions on educational administration faculties.

Socialization of Women and Sex-Role Stereotyping

A significant amount of research, largely conducted in the 1970s, led to the conclusion that women were excluded from leadership positions as a "result of the interaction of sex role stereotypes, occupational sex typing, socialization, and discrimination" (Adkison, 1981, pp. 311-312). As Adkison noted:

> While these concepts can be considered singly, they tend to be linked in an argument which demonstrates the existence of sex role and occupational stereotypes, shows that people are socialized to accept them, and argues that their acceptance, particularly by men, explains discrimination. (p. 312)

It was clear then, as well as today, that socialization of women and men and discrimination by men against women are instrumental in determining whether women aspire to, or are employed in, positions that traditionally are male dominated. The professorship in educational administration is one of those fields that historically has been occupied by males, and there is little doubt that the factors noted by Adkison and other researchers have played a role in maintaining the status quo.

Sex role stereotypes and sex role socialization lessen the probability that women will seek positions that historically have been perceived as men's. Male dominance tends to perpetuate itself (Schmuck, 1975a). Men who occupy the positions are unlikely to believe that women are capable of filling their jobs, and women themselves are likely to believe the same thing (Schmuck, 1975b; Taylor, 1973, cited in Weber, Feldman, & Poling, 1981). The barriers to women include not only those persons who discriminate against them, in thought and deed, but also women themselves who must overcome their tendency to believe themselves unworthy. Women sometimes have to be urged to lift their level of aspiration (Schmuck, 1975a).

Higher education, except for those fields perceived as feminine, is traditionally supportive of male role expectations and values (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Sutherland, 1985). This constitutes

another barrier for women who may desire to enter the professorship. It is an even greater hurdle for women who seek positions in the fields dominated by men. Making the transition from doctoral student to professor is difficult for anyone, male or female, but it is even harder for women (Lincoln, 1986). It is a great leap from the role of doctoral student to professor, and for women, who "are typically not mentored in the way men are" (Lincoln, 1986), the jump is likely to be even more difficult.

The field of social psychology supports the need for women professors of K-12 educational administration based on research that suggests the influence that women professors can have on the behaviors of women graduate students. Social influence theory has established the importance of perceived similarity of the source of influence (women professors) to oneself (women graduate students) and subsequent impact on behavior change (Byrne, 1979; McGuire, 1985; Simons, Berkowitz, & Moyer, 1970; and Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy, 1965). In other words, research supports the tremendous potential of women professors to influence women graduate students to adopt behaviors of the professoriate which can lead to subsequent decisions to enter the profession.

In addition, research findings in the area of gender differences in influenceability, though somewhat divided, does indicate that women are more likely to "conform" to models than are

males (Osman, 1982). Women professors provide appropriate models in that sense.

Mentors are important to all persons and may be even more critical for those who are moving into fields that in the past have been closed to them.

Mentoring

A mentor is one who provides guidance and support to a novice (Bolton, 1980). The mentor promotes his or her protege by providing psychological support, promoting the protege's abilities, and providing the novice with access to resources (Swoboda & Millar, 1986). For persons entering any field, and particularly for those aspiring to the professoriate, a mentor may be critical to obtaining a position as well as realizing a successful career.

Sponsors "are important to men's success in organizations and absolutely essential for women's success" (Hetherington & Barcelo, 1985, p. 12, citing Kanter, 1977). Men making the transition from graduate school to positions in higher education have long had the advantage of mentors, while women have not. Mentors tend to select persons of the same class, ethnic background, and gender (Swoboda & Millar, 1986), and "because most people with sufficient institutional power to act as mentors are male, grooming-mentoring relationships most often involve two men" (Swoboda & Millar, 1986, p. 10). Men who do select females as proteges may tend to sponsor women who conform

to their stereotypes; that is, their "female proteges are passive and nonthreatening, or at least capable of appearing so" (Adkison, 1981, p. 323). Other reasons suggested for men not sponsoring women include the fear that adopting a woman as a protege may lead to colleagues' suspicion of a sexual relationship and the conception by many men that women are not serious about careers (Bolton, 1980). Large numbers of women, then, often are not chosen as proteges, and thus are handicapped in their search for a position in higher education.

The absence of female role models inhibits the career advancement of women (Bolton, 1980). "The presence of senior women who have 'made it' can be a facilitating factor in the formation" of a professional identity (Hetherington & Barcelo, 1985, p. 12). There are few senior women to provide role models for female novices. Moreover, Bolton suggested that "females rarely provide a mentor relationship for other women" (Bolton, 1980, p. 204). She called this the "queen bee" syndrome, meaning that "there can be only one outstanding female in an organization and that each one has to fight her way to the top with no help from her female colleagues who have already made it" (p. 204).

Although it may to some extent be easier for women to find a mentor today than in the recent past, and more women are in the position to serve as mentors or role models for women entering the

professoriate, the situation is by no means ideal. The barriers to women obtaining sponsors remain formidable.

Networking

The sponsorship of a mentor is one means of attaining entrance into the profession. However, securing a position is only the first step toward achieving acceptance as a respected colleague among one's peers. For any person this may be a trying time. For women, entering a field that is dominated by males and male values, achieving acceptance as a colleague and carving out a niche among other faculty can be difficult. Everyone needs information about the organization and its mores and support from one's colleagues, especially during the initial period of employment. Such support is not readily available to women, and networking has been suggested as a means for women to obtain it.

While networking is related to mentoring, the two concepts are not synonymous. Mentoring involves a sponsoring relationship in which a person is "groomed" for a position (Swoboda & Millar, 1986). The mentor assists the protege in seeking a position and in learning its mores. In a sense, the mentor accepts the responsibility for the protege's knowledge and competence (Swoboda & Millar, 1986).

However, when a person is on the job, the responsibility for success shifts to the job holder. It becomes that person's responsibility to develop the structures necessary to provide the

foundation for success (Marshall, 1984). A woman generally must rely on herself to develop such structures (Swoboda & Millar, 1986). Networking, in contrast to mentoring, "entails more flexible and mutually independent patterns of training, information sharing, and support" (Swoboda & Millar, 1986, p. 11). Instead of a single sponsor who accepts the responsibility for inducting the new person into the profession, a network consists of a number of persons who can provide various forms of support and information for the new colleague. The woman who generates networking relationships develops self-reliance, because "having no one in particular, but many in general, upon whom she depends, she is never tempted to become overly dependent" (Swoboda & Millar, 1986, p. 11). Networking, then, involves developing a large number of dyadic relationships in which one can share and receive information and support. Information will include "appropriate attitudes, behaviors, and norms" for the organization (Marshall, 1986, p. 3, citing Breer & Locke, 1965) and knowledge about opportunities for advancement. Through the network the woman can obtain psychological support in order to "maintain . . . confidence and aspiration during times of role ambiguity, role conflict, and organizational testing" (Marshall, 1986, p. 3).

Women often are alone on the job and perceived as tokens. Networking with other women can help relieve some of the problems

associated with tokenism, for example, a decline in self-esteem (Yoder, 1985). Women are urged to seek out other women with whom to share problems and concerns, and from whom to secure support (Hetherington & Barcelo, 1985). Clearly, women may be the best support group for each other, and the burden may fall on them to develop networking structures to assist each other. In particular, women who have "made it" have a responsibility to assist other women entering the field.

It is no easy task for a person to aspire to a position that traditionally has been dominated by the other sex. How does one decide that the obstacles can be overcome? Are there barriers within the person that precludes even trying? What are the factors that assist or act as deterrents to a woman seeking and finding employment in higher education? How important are role models, mentors, and informal networks to women? And how do women who find employment in educational administration programs feel about their jobs? Do they see themselves as colleagues, or are they isolated. These were some of the questions that guided the research.

Method

Instrument

A 37-item questionnaire was adapted from an instrument used in a study, "Women in Educational Administration: A Study of Selected High Achievers" (Loposer & Price, 1981). It addressed the following:

background information, graduate school experiences, first employment, current status, job satisfaction, and (5-point Likert scale) perceptions of career and personal-related qualities and characteristics. Four open-ended questions asked for a list of discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion, and perceptions of additional thrusts needed in preparation programs for K-12 administrators that relate to equity issues.

Data Source

All women professors of K-12 educational administration in colleges and universities across the nation (N = 212) were drawn from the 1987 Directory of Professors of Educational Administration (Lilley, 1987), the UCEA list of women professors of educational administration (UCEA, 1985), and various directories that provide means for cross checking names and current positions. Of the 212 identified professors, 22 were found to be no longer in a position in the professorship or were incorrectly identified as being in the K-12 administration area in both their teaching responsibilities as well as doctoral preparation. Of the 190 participants, 130 were returned and were usable. This provided a response rate of 70%. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and log linear statistical analysis.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Women professors of educational administration were more likely to represent white, Ph.D. holders in their 40s, fairly evenly divided between nontenured as well as assistant and associate level faculty status who have been at their present university for less than 4 years as summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Faculty time was divided between research, teaching, and student advising. Integrity (m = 4.74) and professionalism (m = 4.70) rated highest as respondents best perceived career-related qualities. Currently, 48% of the respondents report that they are the only female departmental faculty member. Only 5% of the women responded that they frequently network with other women professors of educational administration. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents said that they rarely or never network with other women professors. Table 2 highlights that over half of the women felt that they were highly skilled in teaching and administrative abilities while research skills were designated as an area in need of additional development in relation to their own competencies.

Insert Table 2 about here

As summarized in Table 3, for 55% of the respondents, formal socialization into the profession began by way of graduate assistantships, while 32% worked full or part time while pursuing their graduate studies on a part time basis. One third of the women responded that either long-term interest in the profession or a recommendation of a college professor sparked their interest in entering the professorship. In contrast 11% responded that confidence in their ability to handle this type of position was the most important factor in their decision to enter the professorate. Obtaining a faculty position came immediately upon graduation for 37% of the women, while 28% stated that it took 2 or more years to secure such a position.

For 81% of the women, there were no women or only one woman in the professoriate in the department of educational administration during their graduate studies. Of the 100 respondents reporting that they had a mentor in their graduate studies, 88% had male mentors.

Insert Table 3 about here

When asked about their relative satisfaction with their current position, 84% expressed satisfaction and 87% said that they would choose the professoriate all over again. Of the professors responding, 52% wish to remain in the teaching/research faculty position with 18% expressing interest in pursuing an administrative post. When asked if they had ever held a school administrative position, 63% responded that they had held some kind of school administrative position at some point in their careers as summarized in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Log Linear Statistical Analysis

Percentages of length of job search, sex of mentor, number of women faculty, and method of pursuing graduate training are presented in Table 5. A backward stepwise loglinear analysis was conducted to

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Insert Table 5 about here

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investigate relationships among these variables. Using the procedures recommended by Marascuilo and Busk (1987), the researchers identified a combination of the above variables and interactions between them that significantly departed from chance. Of the several

significant combinations, the most parsimonious model of these variables was selected based on the correspondence of degrees of freedom in the model to the sample size (Marascuilo & Busk, 1987). The model chosen included main effects for all four of the variables, along with the interaction between length of job search and number of women faculty. The models in the analysis are presented in Table 6.

Insert Table 6 about here

Overall, female faculty members in educational administration in the study almost always had male mentors and usually were hired immediately after completing their graduate training. Most of them also were graduate assistants during their training. Graduate programs that hired them were staffed predominantly by male faculty members. Interestingly, participants in the study were more likely to get jobs immediately after graduation in programs with fewer female faculty members. This finding may be explained by the overwhelming majority of participants with male mentors, who may have used the primarily male network to locate and secure job placements. Female faculty apparently have not developed inroads into this network, nor have they established a female faculty network.

Discussion and Implications

The study findings suggest several implications relative to encouraging more women graduate students to enter the professoriate.

First, women graduate students should be given greater opportunities to further develop research skills. This would address the study findings that women professors perceive research skills as being the weakest area of preparation. Women graduate students should be given greater opportunities to become involved in faculty research. This involvement would provide early publications that should provide the new doctorate an increased edge in the job search for a faculty position.

Second, women students must begin networking in graduate school. Professors can facilitate this effort though women professors who participated in this study said that they did little networking with other women professors outside their own institution. Some of the women expressed a real sense of isolation. One woman, who is the only woman faculty member in her department, wrote of a professional life characterized by a sense of isolation and a longing for formal and informal channels of communication and college relationships.

Third, the lack of women mentors from the professor ranks is highlighted by this study. Though not discounting the male mentor, the study participants recognized the impact in terms of similarity

(social influence theory) between women relative to roles, concerns, life experiences, and motivation as helpful in developing a positive perception of the female professor.

Finally, women professors of K-12 administration provide models for school districts and the public-at-large, contributing to the positive image of women as educational administrators and leaders. This study, by focusing strictly on professors of K-12 administration, highlights the fact that these women professors are fewer in number than most studies suggest (see McCarthy et al., 1988). Unfortunately, until these numbers increase, the opportunities for mentoring, networking, and modeling fall on the shoulders of a few.

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Table 1

Background of K-12 Women Professors (N = 130)

	%
Age	
29 and under	1
30-39	17
40-49	44
50-59	28
60 and over	10
Racial/Ethnic Background	
White	85
Black	10
Hispanic	4
Asian American	0
American Indian/Alaskan Pacific	1

Table 2

Current Position (N = 130)

	%
Rank	
Instructor/Lecturer	2
Assistant Professor	35
Associate Professor	38
Full Professor	25
Served as chair	
Yes	24
No	76
How heard about position	
Announcement	37
Sponsored	18
Recruited	35
Other	10
Current status	
Tenured	56
Nontenured	44
Years in professoriate	
0-4	43
5-9	26
10-14	19
15 or more	12
Annual salary	
Below 20,000	2
20,001-29,999	18
30,000-49,999	68
50,000 or more	12

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

	%
Number of women faculty in department	
1	48
2	29
3	12
4 or more	11
Network with other women professors	
Not at all	36
Rarely	33
Sometimes	26
Frequently	5
Major reason for remaining in professoriate	
Leadership	23
Creativity/research	21
Public service	6
Personal satisfaction	31
Financial rewards	1
Lack of alternative	2
Other	16

Table 3

The Doctoral Program (N = 130)

	%
Highest degree	
Ph.D.	53
Ed.D.	43
Other (J.D.)	2
Length of time to earn degree	
Less than 3 years	19
3-5 years	23
6 or more years	58
How degree pursued	
Graduate assistantship	55
Full time/no assistantship	13
Part-time	32
Time of decision to enter professoriate	
Upon entering doctoral program	22
During doctoral program	27
After graduation	17
Other	34
Factor most affecting decision	
Long-term interest	18
Recommendation by faculty	20
Suggestion by family	2
My own confidence	11
Admired a professor	4
Career change opportunity	27
Interest in research	6
Financial rewards	0
Other	12

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

	%
Number of women faculty in doctoral program	
0	50
1	31
2	10
3 or more	9
Doctoral mentor	
Male	88
Female	12
Obstacles	
Marriage, family	8
Personal crisis	13
Changed majors	2
Other	9
No obstacles	59
Multiple reasons	9
Time to secure first full-time tenure position	
Immediately	37
Less than 6 months	6
6 months to year	6
1-2 years	18
More than 2 years	28
Still waiting for full-time	5

Table 4

Professional Expectations (N = 130)

	%
Areas feel most qualified	
Teaching	42
Research	13
Administration	21
Human/social	11
All	13
Areas feel need improvement	
Teaching	4
Research	48
Administration	13
Human/social	8
None	27
Level of job satisfaction	
Very dissatisfied	2
Somewhat dissatisfied	14
Somewhat satisfied	37
Very satisfied	47
Choose the professoriate again	
Yes	87
No	9
Unsure	4
Experienced discrimination in promotion and/or hiring	
Yes	16
No	44
Not applicable	40
Future goals	
Remain in teaching	52
Pursue administration (chair, etc.)	18
Leave	7
Other	16

Table 5

Percentages of number of women faculty, length of time before finding job, gender of mentor, and method of pursuing graduate training

	Length of time before finding job					
Women faculty	Immed	<6 mths	6 mths	1-2 yrs	>2 yrs	still wtg
			Male mentor			
No women faculty						
pursue = assistant	13.27	.00	2.65	1.77	8.85	1.77
pursue = full-time	1.77	.88	.00	.00	1.77	.00
pursue = part-time	3.54	.88	.88	2.65	4.42	1.77
1 women faculty						
pursue = assistant	5.31	.00	1.77	5.31	2.65	.00
pursue = full-time	.88	.00	.00	.00	.88	.00
pursue = part-time	3.54	.00	.88	.88	3.54	.00
2 women faculty						
pursue = assistant	2.65	.00	.00	.88	1.77	.00
pursue = full-time	.88	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
pursue = part-time	.88	.00	.00	1.77	.00	.00
3 or more women faculty						
pursue = assistant	.88	.00	.00	.88	.88	.88
pursue = full-time	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.88
pursue = part-time	1.77	.00	.00	1.77	.00	.00

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Women faculty	Length of time before finding job					
	Immed	<6 mths	6 mths 1-2 yrs		>2 yrs	still wtg
	Female mentor					
No women faculty						
pursue = assistant	.00	.00	.00	.88	.00	.00
pursue = full-time	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
pursue = part-time	.00	.88	.00	.00	.00	.00
1 women faculty						
pursue = assistant	.88	.00	.00	.88	.88	.00
pursue = full-time	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.77	.00
pursue = part-time	.00	.00	.00	.88	.00	.00
2 women faculty						
pursue = assistant	.88	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
pursue = full-time	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
pursue = part-time	.00	.88	.00	.00	.00	.00
3 or more women faculty						
pursue = assistant	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
pursue = full-time	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
pursue = part-time	.00	.00	.00	.00	.88	.88

Table 6

Backward stepwise loglinear analysis of length of job search, sex of mentor, number of women faculty, and position pursued

Model	G^2	df	p
[MJWP]	0.00	0	0.0
[MJW, MJP, MWP, JWP]	1.16	30	1.0
[MJW, MJP, MWP]	16.98	60	1.0
[MJW, MWP, JP]	19.54	70	1.0
[MWP, JP, MJ, JW]	29.42	85	1.0
[JP, MJ, JW, MW, WP]	38.22	91	1.0
[JP, MJ, JW, MW]	41.28	99	1.0
[MJ, JW, MW, P]	57.03	109	1.0
[JW, MW, P]	67.45	114	1.0
[JW, P, M]*	73.45	117	.9

Note. J = length of job search; M = sex of mentor; W = number of women faculty; and P = position pursued.

*Most parsimonious model.